Positive Employee Attitudes

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WEEK 10

Positive Employee Attitudes & Engagement

Jobs constitute a major part of our lives and are one of the greatest sources of personal pleasure and pain. Employee attitudes determine if we stay in a job, with a company, or on a career path.

Understanding Employee Engagement

⚡ **Vigor**

Energy and enthusiasm about work tasks and environment.

♡ **Dedication**

Strong commitment to work and organization.

Absorption

Deep concentration and immersion in work activities.

Factors Contributing to Engagement

Recognition & Rewards

Acknowledgment for accomplishments

Organizational Support

Feeling backed by supervisors and company

Fair Treatment

Equitable policies and procedures

Meaningful Work

Jobs with strong characteristics that engage employees

The Importance of Inclusion

Uniqueness

Employees can be their authentic selves at work

Belonging

Feeling connected to the team and organization

Performance

Inclusive environments enhance job performance

Creativity

Inclusion promotes innovative thinking

Job Satisfaction Approaches

Global Approach

Considers overall satisfaction with the job as a whole.

- Uses single ratings or few items

- Measures complete satisfaction

- Simple to implement

Facet Approach

Examines satisfaction with specific job elements.

- Pay and benefits

- Work conditions

- Supervision quality

- Advancement opportunities

Measuring Job Satisfaction

Interviews

Face-to-face discussions about job experiences and feelings.

Group Meetings

Collective discussions about workplace satisfaction.

Surveys & Questionnaires

Anonymous written feedback about job elements.

Rating Scales

Quantitative measures of satisfaction levels.

Challenges in Satisfaction Measurement

Self-Report Limitations

Employees may not accurately report their true feelings due to fear of retaliation or social desirability bias.

Individual Differences

Genetic predispositions and personality traits may influence satisfaction regardless of job conditions.

Interpretation Issues

Without benchmarks, it's difficult to determine if scores indicate actual dissatisfaction or normal desires.

Creating Effective Satisfaction Measures

Develop Reliable Tools

Create measures with consistent results across time and situations.

Ensure Validity

Confirm measures actually assess job satisfaction, not other constructs.

Establish Benchmarks

Compare results to standards to meaningfully interpret scores.

Measuring Job Satisfaction & Performance

This presentation explores standardized job satisfaction surveys, their benefits, and relationships between satisfaction, performance, attendance, and turnover.

Standardized Job Satisfaction Surveys

Established Reliability

Standardized surveys have proven reliability and validity through extensive testing.

Cost-Effective

Organizations save resources by using established measurement tools.

Normative Data

Companies can compare their results with similar organizations to gauge performance.

Benefits of Comparative Data

Accurate Assessment

Companies can determine if satisfaction levels are low, high, or normal compared to industry standards.

Resource Allocation

Prevents spending time and resources on non-issues when scores are actually average.

Research Value

Allows researchers to investigate organizational factors that cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)

Comprehensive

Measures 20 different job facets for detailed analysis.

Rating Scale

Uses "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied" scale for nuanced responses.

Well-Researched

Established high levels of reliability and validity.

On my present job, this is how I feel about	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
1 Being able to keep busy all the time	1	2	3	4	5
2 The chance to work alone on the job	1	2	3	4	5
3 The chance to do different things from time to time	1	2	3	4	5
4 The chance to be somebody in the community	1	2	3	4	5
5 The way my boss handles his or her workers	1	2	3	4	5
6 The competence of my supervisor in making decisions	1	2	3	4	5
7 The way my job provides for steady employment	1	2	3	4	5
8 My pay and the amount of work I do	1	2	3	4	5
9 The chances for advancement on this job	1	2	3	4	5
10 The working conditions	1	2	3	4	5
11 The way my coworkers get along with each other	1	2	3	4	5
12 The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 8.3 Sample items from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire.
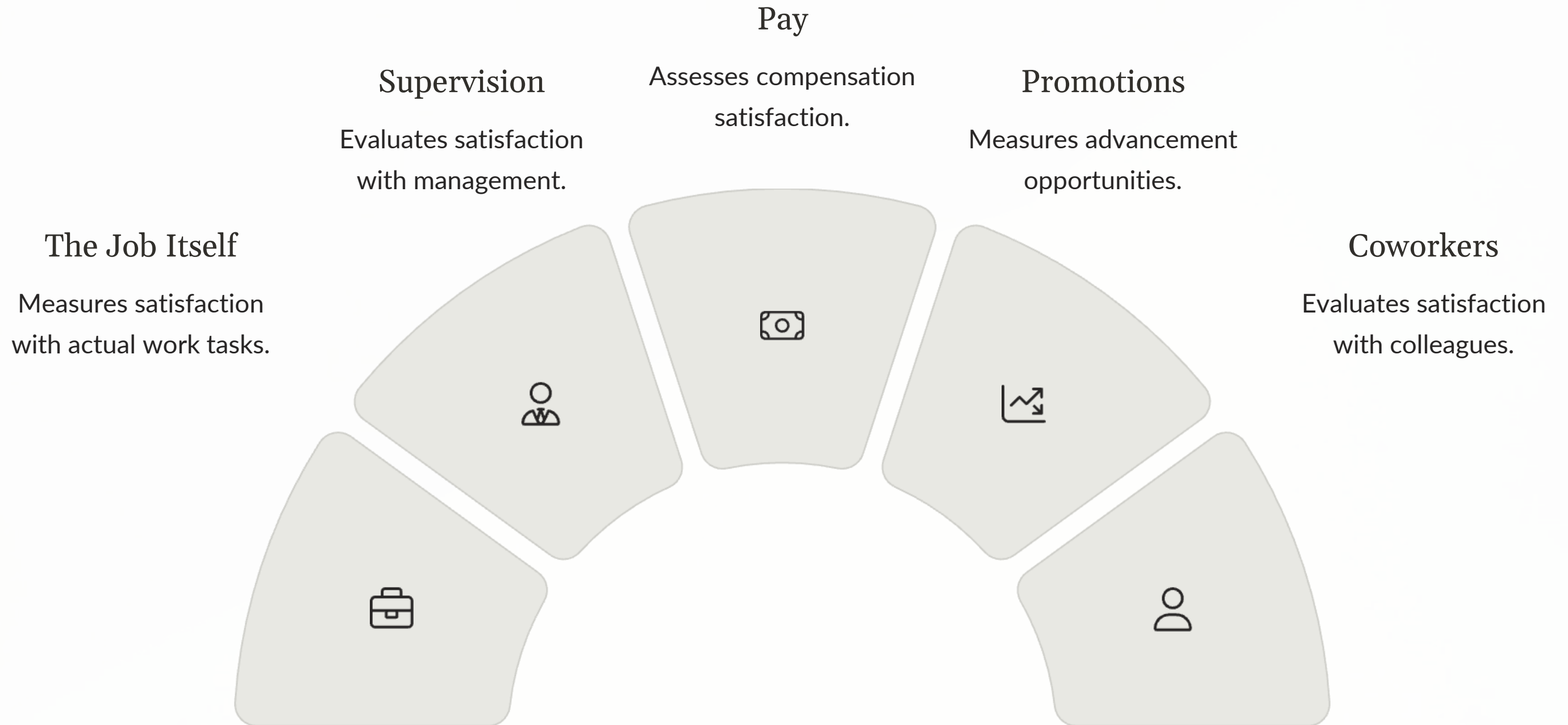
Source: Adapted from Weiss et al., 1967.

Think of your present work. What is it like most of the time? In the blank beside each word given below, write:

Y for "Yes" if it describes your work
N for "No" if it does NOT describe it
? if you cannot decide

Work on present job
  Routine
  Satisfying
  Good

Think of the kind of supervision that you get on your job. How well does each of the following words describe this supervision? In the blank beside each word below put:

Y if it describes the supervision you get on your job
N if it does NOT describe it
? if you cannot decide

Supervision on present job
  Impolite
  Praises good work
  Doesn't supervise enough

Think of the pay you get now. How well does each of the following words describe your present pay? In the blank beside each word, put:

Y if it describes your pay
N if it does NOT describe it
? if you cannot decide

Present pay
  Income adequate for normal expenses
  Insecure

Think of the majority of the people that you work with now or the people you meet in connection with your work. How well does each of the following words describe these people? In the blank beside each word below, put:

Y if it describes the people you work with
N if it does NOT describe them
? if you cannot decide

People on your present job
  Boring
  Responsible
  Intelligent

Think of the opportunities for promotion that you have now. How well does each of the following words describe these? In the blank beside each word, put:

Y for "Yes" if it describes your opportunities
N for "No" if it does NOT describe them
? if you cannot decide

Opportunities for promotion
  Dead-end job
  Unfair promotion policy
  Regular promotions

Think of your job in general. All in all, what is it like most of the time? In the blank beside each word below, write:

Y for "Yes" if it describes your job
N for "No" if it does NOT describe it
? if you cannot decide

Job in general
  Undesirable
  Better than most
  Rotten

Figure 8.4 Sample items from the Job Descriptive Index, Revised (each scale is presented on a separate page).

Note: The Job Descriptive Index is copyrighted by Bowling Green State University.

Source: Smith et al., 1985.

Job Descriptive Index (JDI)

Pay

Assesses compensation satisfaction.

Supervision

Evaluates satisfaction with management.

Promotions

Measures advancement opportunities.

The Job Itself

Measures satisfaction with actual work tasks.

Coworkers

Evaluates satisfaction with colleagues.

JDI Response Format

Simple Format

Respondents mark "yes," "no," or "undecided" for each descriptor.

Scoring System

Each response has a numerical value reflecting how well it describes a satisfying job.

Five Facet Scores

Responses are summed to create five distinct satisfaction scores.

Cultural Considerations

Cultural Definitions

Different cultures define job satisfaction differently.

Response Patterns

Cultural groups respond to measures in distinct ways.

Global Understanding

Researchers work to understand satisfaction across cultures.

As you read this chapter, you will become more aware of some of the aspects of work that are related to job satisfaction for workers. However, the large majority of these studies are done in the U.S. As with research in all areas of psychology, we cannot conclude that the results of studies conducted with workers within the U.S. will generalize to workers in other countries and cultures. For example, you probably find that good relationships with your coworkers and supervisors add to the satisfaction that you find in your job. Are such personal relationships at work as important to workers throughout the world as they appear to be with American workers? And what other aspects of work add to job satisfaction for workers outside the U.S.?

One study conducted in Japan found that supportive supervision, as well as support from coworkers,
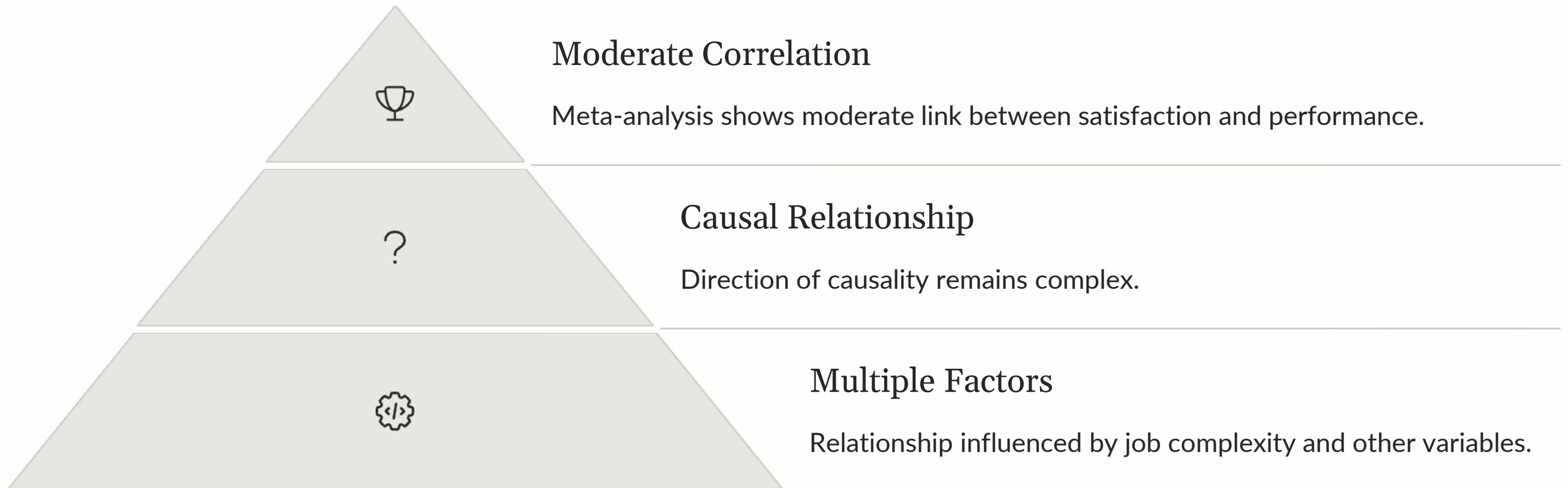
was positively correlated with workers' job satisfaction (Kumara & Koichi, 1989). According to this study, support from coworkers and supervisors was especially important to employees who did not feel positive about the work they performed (e.g., those who found their jobs unpleasant, very difficult, or stressful). These workers in "unfulfilling" jobs depended on good interpersonal relationships to feel satisfied, similar to findings of studies conducted using U.S. workers.

Along with having good social relationships at work, many U.S. workers prefer to have a variety of tasks to do and to have some autonomy in performing those tasks. Similarly, workers' job satisfaction in Australia (Sawang et al., 2020), Canada (Barken et al., 2018), and the Netherlands (van Dorssen-Boog et al., 2020) is positively related to having autonomy. These facets of the job may also account for the findings in the U.S. that blue-collar and white-collar workers have different levels of job satisfaction along with different factor structures of what constitutes job satisfaction (Hu et al., 2010). Specifically, Hu and colleagues found that white-collar workers distinguish two different aspects of their work: whether it is boring and whether it provides a sense of accomplishment, whereas blue-collar workers rate these various factors as a single measure ranging from negative to positive. Consistent with these findings, one comparison of white-collar workers in the U.S. and India

found remarkable similarity in the factors that contributed to these workers' job satisfaction (Takalkar & Coovert, 1994).

Obviously, the international findings discussed here are mostly based on studies of workers in developed countries, where workers enjoy a certain level of job security, adequate pay, and good working conditions. For example, one study found differences in job satisfaction levels between U.S. workers and workers in the Philippines (Rothausen et al., 2009). Another study found differences in job satisfaction among workers from countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Lange, 2009). Whether or not workers in more underdeveloped nations would look to such things as task variety and autonomy for sources of job satisfaction has not yet been determined (Judge et al., 2001). Perhaps workers in underdeveloped nations have different sources of satisfaction, which are possibly related to more basic survival needs (e.g., pay) than workers in more developed nations. However, one would expect that, as these nations develop and gain economic strength, workers the world over will look to their jobs to fulfill higher-level needs, such as support from coworkers, recognition, and the opportunity to control their own work behaviors and reach their highest potential. Indeed, having control over one's work decisions is positively related to job satisfaction (Keller & Semmer, 2013).

Job Satisfaction and Performance

Moderate Correlation

Meta-analysis shows moderate link between satisfaction and performance.

Causal Relationship

Direction of causality remains complex.

Multiple Factors

Relationship influenced by job complexity and other variables.

Porter-Lawler Model

Job Performance

Effective performance is the starting point.

Job Rewards

Performance leads to pay increases, promotions, or accomplishment.

Job Satisfaction

Fair rewards lead to satisfaction and higher performance.

Perceived Fairness

Rewards must be perceived as equitable.

Instructions: Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the particular organization for which you are now working (company name), please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by indicating one of the seven scale points listed in the note below these statements.*

☐ 1 I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.

☐ 2 I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.

☐ 3 I feel very little loyalty to this organization. (R)

☐ 4 I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.

☐ 5 I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.

☐ 6 I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.

☐ 7 I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar. (R)

☐ 8 This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.

☐ 9 It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization. (R)

☐ 10 I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.

☐ 11 There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely. (R)

☐ 12 Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees. (R)

☐ 13 I really care about the fate of this organization.

☐ 14 For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.

☐ 15 Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part. (R)

Figure 8.5 The Porter–Lawler model of the job performance–job satisfaction relationship.

Note: Responses to each item are measured on a 7-point scale with scale point anchors labeled as follows: (1) strongly disagree, (2) moderately disagree, (3) slightly disagree, (4) neither disagree nor agree, (5) slightly agree, (6) moderately agree, (7) strongly agree. An "R" denotes a negatively phrased and reverse-scored item.

Source: Porter & Lawler, 1968, as adapted by Baron, 1986.

Factors Affecting Satisfaction-Performance Link

Job Complexity

Stronger relationship in complex jobs like management and engineering.

Complex jobs offer more intrinsic reinforcement opportunities.

Perceived Fairness

Perception of justice in pay is crucial to the link.

"Relative deprivation" can negatively affect satisfaction regardless of actual rewards.

Equity Perceptions

Sense of fair treatment is a key determinant of job satisfaction.

Relationship between inputs and outcomes must feel balanced.

Employee Absenteeism Types

Voluntary Absenteeism

Employees miss work because they want to do something else.

Involuntary Absenteeism

Legitimate excuses like illness or factors beyond control.

Measurement Challenges

Difficult to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary absence.

Paid Sick Leave Impact

13

States Requiring

Only 13 states and Washington D.C. require paid sick leave as of 2020.

Reduced Absence

Providing paid sick leave actually reduces overall sick leave.

Illness Spread

Keeps ill employees home, reducing spread of infectious illnesses.

Factors Influencing Absenteeism

Job satisfaction has a negative but weak relationship with absenteeism. Individual differences like guilt-proneness affect this relationship. Coworker absence rates and organizational climate toward absenteeism also influence individual absence patterns.

Employee Turnover Types

Involuntary Turnover

Occurs when employees are fired or laid off. Can be beneficial when removing poor performers. Not typically influenced by job satisfaction.

Voluntary Turnover

Employees choose to leave. Strongly influenced by job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Can be costly when losing high performers.

Collective Turnover

Employees leave in clusters due to social networks. Negative attitudes can spread through employee groups, leading to mass departures.

Preventing Valuable Employee Turnover

Productive employees who don't receive rewards like promotions and raises are likely to leave. Perceived lack of influence within the organization drives turnover. Giving workers power over their jobs increases satisfaction and reduces turnover.
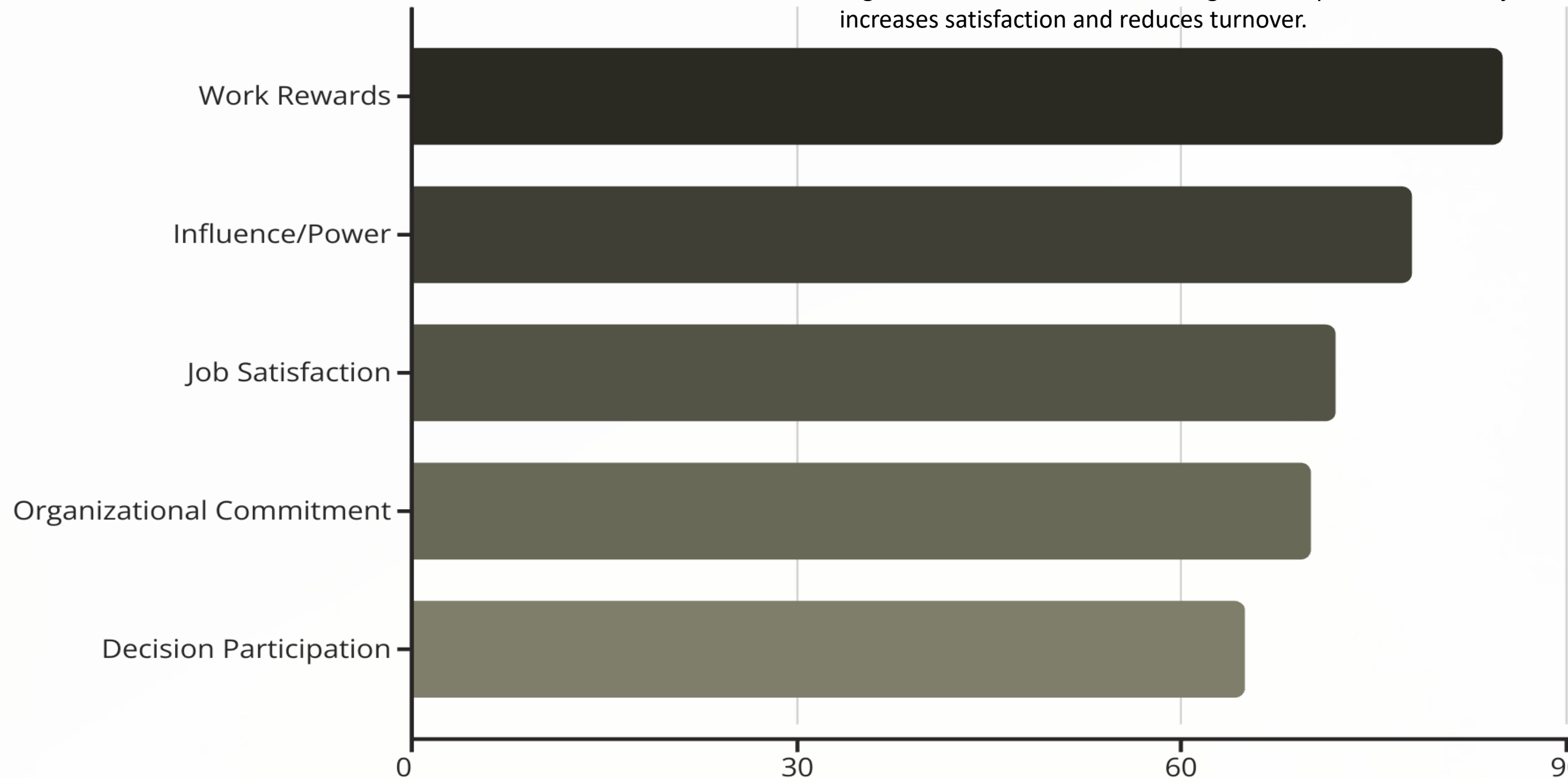
Boosting Employee Engagement & Satisfaction

Employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment are critical factors that impact absenteeism and turnover costs. Organizations implement various strategies to enhance these elements, benefiting both employees and the bottom line.

APPLYING I/O PSYCHOLOGY

Interventions to Enhance Employee Engagement?

Given the benefits of employee engagement, many scholars and practitioners have asked—is it possible to do an intervention to increase engagement in the workplace? And, if so, what should you do?

According to Knight and colleagues, there are four common "types" of work engagement interventions (Knight et al., 2017):

1. Personal resource-building interventions: interventions focused on increasing employees' individual strengths such as self-efficacy (confidence), resilience, or optimism.
2. Job resource-building interventions: interventions focused on improving the work environment such as increasing autonomy, social support, feedback, or developmental opportunities.

APPLYING I/O PSYCHOLOGY

(Continued)

3. Leadership training interventions: interventions focused on developing managers' leadership skills though offering education, practicing goal-setting, and engaging in problem solving.
4. Health promotion interventions: interventions focused on enhancing the health and well-being of employees by reducing stress, increasing mindfulness, and offering stress management or exercise/relaxation opportunities.

In one study, researchers implemented an engagement intervention that focused on increasing personal resources and job resources and challenging job demands in a health-care organization (Van Wingerden et al., 2016). The intervention involved three training sessions that were delivered in a 5-week period. They completed four activities:

1. The first activity focused on accepting the past, appreciating the present, and viewing the future as a source of opportunities.
2. The second activity involved giving and receiving feedback.
3. The third activity required participants to practice refusing requests.
4. The fourth activity related to job crafting and asked participants to consider their job tasks and personal strengths before designing a plan and goals that might increase their social job resources, structural job resources, and challenging job demands.

The researchers used a quasi-experimental design and showed that employees who received the intervention reported increased work engagement and increased job performance (self-rated).

Another study used mindfulness training to increase engagement among surgical intensive care unit personnel and involved meditation, yoga, and music for an hour-long, weekly session for 8 weeks (Steinberg et al., 2017). Participants who received the training also reported increased work satisfaction and reported being more resilient to stress.

Meta-analyses support the general effectiveness of interventions to increase engagement (Knight et al., 2019), suggesting that it is quite possible for organizations to increase employee engagement through a variety of workplace interventions.

Understanding Job Structure Changes

Job Rotation

Moving workers between specialized tasks to reduce monotony and boredom.

Job Enlargement

Adding varied tasks to make workers feel more valuable to the organization.

Job Enrichment

Raising responsibility levels by giving workers voice in planning and evaluation.

Benefits of Restructured Jobs

Job Rotation

Links to increased job satisfaction, higher salaries, and better promotion opportunities.

Reduces monotony while building diverse skills.

Job Enlargement

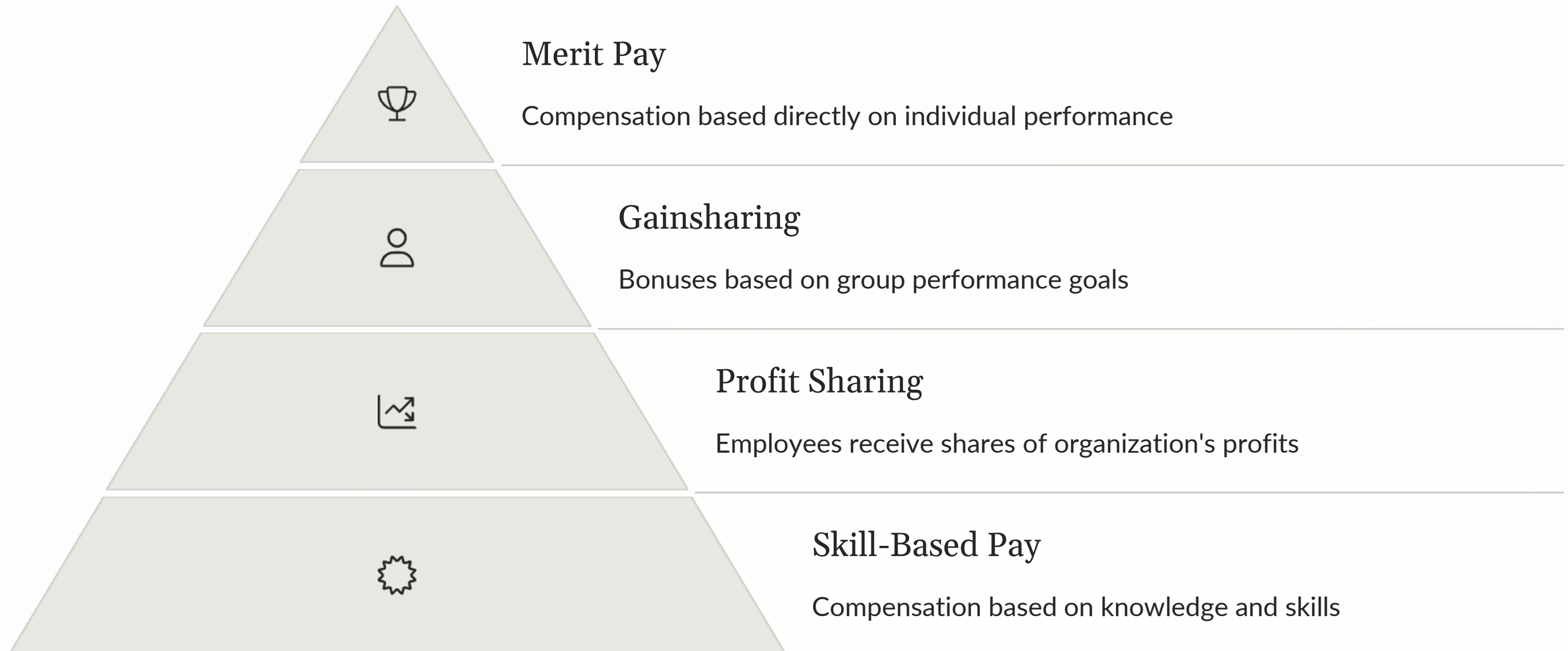Creates greater sense of accomplishment and improves valuable work skills.

Leads to better customer service and employee initiative.

Job Enrichment

Increases independence and responsibility, boosting motivation.

Particularly important to younger workers in today's workforce.

Innovative Compensation Strategies

Merit Pay

Compensation based directly on individual performance

Gainsharing

Bonuses based on group performance goals

Profit Sharing

Employees receive shares of organization's profits

Skill-Based Pay

Compensation based on knowledge and skills

Skill-Based Pay Benefits

Worker Satisfaction

Employees report higher satisfaction compared to conventional pay plans.

Productivity Gains

Workers show increased productivity and greater concern for quality.

Retention Impact

Reduced turnover and increased motivation to develop on the job.

Fairness Perception

Employees view these systems as fairer and the organization as more supportive.

Employee Ownership Programs

Direct Ownership

Employees are sole owners of the organization

Stock Ownership

Employees acquire company shares over time

Voting Rights

Stockholders participate in company decisions

Success depends on financial rewards, management commitment, and clear communication about the program.

Flexible Work Schedules

Standard Schedule

Traditional 5-day, 40-hour workweek

Compressed Workweek

Fewer days with longer hours (e.g., four 10-hour days)

Flextime

Flexible starting/ending times with core hours

Benefits of Flexible Scheduling

3-4
Days Off
Compressed schedules provide longer weekends for personal time.

40%
Cost Savings
Reduced absenteeism and increased productivity offset implementation costs.

30%
Stress Reduction
Flextime commuters report significantly less driver stress.

Comprehensive Benefit Programs

Health Care Options

Various medical, dental, and vision plans

Family Support

Childcare assistance and family leave

Retirement Plans

401(k), pension, and investment options

Career Development

Training and advancement opportunities

Cafeteria-Style Benefits

Personalized Selection

Employees choose benefits that best suit their unique needs and preferences.

Informed Guidance

Proper information helps employees make choices that prevent later dissatisfaction.

Perceived Fairness

Research shows flexible benefits are viewed as fairer than traditional plans.

The Role of Positive Affect

Positive Mood
Influences workplace attitudes and behaviors.

Leadership Impact
Managers significantly affect employee emotions at work.

Improved Outcomes
Positive affect reduces absenteeism and turnover.

Fair Treatment
Even positive dispositions decline without fair treatment.